

Culmstock Rural District.

COUNTY OF DEVON.

Annual Report of Medical Officer of Health,

For the year ended 31st December, 1904.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my Report for the year 1904.

The Total Births registered were 91, giving a Birth Rate of 27.4 per 1,000, being the highest rate for the past five years and an increase on that of last year. The rural Birth Rate for North Devon for 1903 was 23.6 and that for the whole of England and Wales 28.4; the average for your district for the preceding nine years being 27.77.

The Total Deaths registered were 45 in number, giving a Death rate of 13.5 per 1000. This is a falling off from last year when it was 8.7, an exceptionally low rate. The rate for 1903 for rural North Devon was 11.6, and that for the whole of England and Wales was 15.4.

The average for your district for the preceding nine years was 14.3.

The Infant Death Rate per 1000 Births registered was 109.8, being very bad compared with last year's rate of 36.1, and a high one for a rural district; the average for your district for the preceding nine years being 89.92.

The Death Rate from the principal Epidemic Diseases was .9 per 1000, being entirely caused by three deaths from Whooping Cough. The Rate is the same as that of 1903. All these Deaths occurred in children under one year of age.

Of the 45 Deaths registered 10 occurred in children under one year of age, and 20 in persons over 65, and 10 of these latter were persons over 80 years of age. Of the Deaths three were due to whooping cough, average of five preceding years, 1.4; two were due to consumption, average of preceding five years, 3.3; two to cancer, average of preceding five years, 2; nine to pulmonary diseases, average of preceding five years, 8.4; eight to heart diseases, average of preceding five years, 6.6; and one to accident, average of preceding five years, 1.

The following Table gives the **Vital Statistics** for the separate parishes in your district:—

		Estimated Population.	Births Registered.	Deaths at all Ages.	Deaths under one year.
Culmstock	..	760	16	11	0
Hemyock	..	817	25	11	4
Clayhidon	..	461	9	5	0
Burlescombe	..	670	26	12	3
Holcombe Rogus	..	604	15	6	3
		—	—	—	—
Totals	..	3312	91	45	10

House Accommodation. That provided for the labouring classes still leaves much to be desired in many parts. There is rather more new building going on in the district than usual. During the past year, after much discussion and consideration you have adopted a set of Bye-laws, in connection with the erection of new buildings, suitable for a rural district. These bye-laws give you a very desirable power to prevent the erection of insanitary dwellings and at the same time judiciously and tactfully administered by you will not prove irksome or in any way prohibitive to those wishing to build.

No cases of over-crowding have called for action during the past year.

Pigs and Poultry are frequently kept too near the dwelling-houses to be wise from a sanitary point of view, but at the same time this is a very difficult point to deal with.

Water Supply. Only one case of water-borne disease has come under my notice and that was a case of typhoid fever. In this case my analysis proved the drinking water to be badly contaminated. The owner of the property sank a new well and provided a good water supply.

I have analysed about 12 samples of water during 1904, and where necessary my suggestions have been carried out.

The supply of drinking water for the district is almost entirely provided by wells and on the whole the water is good.

Several new wells have been sunk in the district during the past year.

Sewerage and Drainage. No public work has been carried out by you during 1904, with the exception of repair to the Hemyock sewer.

Scavenging is not carried out by the Council, but is done by the occupiers. House refuse, slops and drainage are largely used for the purpose of soil fertilization.

Isolation Hospital. None provided.

Disinfection is carried out by your Inspector. In no case have we had any further spread of infection.

Lime-washing is afterwards carried out by the owners of property.

Prevalence of Sickness. Nearly the whole of your district has suffered from a severe epidemic of whooping cough, which I regret to say has been answerable for three deaths and has seriously affected the attendance at most of the elementary schools. It would be better if parents would more realise that it is for the good of both the sick and the healthy that those suffering from this disease should be strictly isolated and kept in warm but not stuffy rooms to avoid as far as possible complications such as catarrh, bronchitis, and broncho-pneumonia, which add so much to both the danger to life and the prolongation of the disease.

Five cases of **Notifiable Zymotic Disease** have been notified, namely two of diphtheria two of scarlet fever, and one of typhoid fever, none of which I am happy to be able to report ended fatally.

Common Lodging Houses. None in the district.

Slaughter-Houses and Bakehouses have all been inspected and found in a satisfactory state, and the necessary lime-washing has been carried out in compliance with the law.

Public Elementary Schools have been inspected and practically all found in a satisfactory condition. Some improvement in ventilation has been carried out at Hemyock. Some new flooring has been provided in the yard of the Burlescombe School.

Dairies and Cowsheds Act. None are registered in the district. I fear that sometimes cowsheds are not kept as clean as is necessary in the interests of public health, and milkers do not fully realise the importance of cleanliness of clothes, hands, and the udders of the cows. By many these are looked upon as "new-fangled" ideas, but none the less it is certain that the dangers of the bacterial infection of the consumers of the milk are considerably lessened by these common-sense observations of the principles of cleanliness.

Factories and Workshops Act. Your Inspector and myself inspected the houses of 23 people employed by the Chard Lace Co., of Ilminster, residing at Holcombe Rogus and Burlescombe. We found no conditions prejudicial to the health of the workers. We also inspected the chair factory at Holcombe Rogus and found things in a satisfactory state.

Inspector. The Report of your Inspector, Mr. R. W. Beadon, is appended, and I wish to take this opportunity of testifying to his ready help in sanitary matters.

I am, gentlemen,

Faithfully yours,

W. HORTON DATE,

Medical Officer of Health.

CULMSTOCK, Feb. 10th, 1905.

Culmstock Rural District.

COUNTY OF DEVON.

Annual Report of Inspector,

For the year ended 31st December, 1904.

GENTLEMEN,

There is nothing calling for particular mention as regards the year 1904.

The health of the district was good and comparatively free from notifiable disease. The most serious cases were those of diphtheria at Holcombe and a case of typhoid at Culmstock, the latter traceable to bad water. There were about two cases of scarlet fever. The usual disinfecting was done with satisfactory results.

I inspected the Schools, Bakehouses, Slaughter-houses, and Railway conveniences as usual and also the Rooms used by the home-workers at Lace-mending.

Your Obedient Servant,

R. W. BEADON.

4th February, 1905.

